

### HAWLEY SMART'S VIEWS ON THE TURF.

### The Danger Threatening the Great Sport of Horse Racing in the Midst of Unprecedented Times

Is the *Fort* entering on its decline? In some respects it is undoubtedly deteriorating. Sixty years since, when it was the fashion for men of the very best social status to dine in company with the gladiators of the period at "the sporting houses"—taverns of which a retired prizefighter was usually the landlord—any one who had ventured to prophesy the extinction of pugilism would have aroused in the crowd a riotous and ferocious uproar. Later the ring was a thing of the past. The villainous acumen that clung to its skirts hastened its doom. Racing is infested with a similar army of parasites.

there more horses in training; and as for the average made in July by the Blankney yearlings, it is a sum of which the breeder of thoroughbred stock could not, in his most sanguine mood, have conceived. We turn out as good horses as ever; but how very few of them survive a fourth year's training! I am speaking of such as are giants in the land. For instance, in St. Simon and St. Gatien there can be no doubt that we had last year two very

high-class horse, but already the foresh was ascribed to the severe discipline of the training ground, while from other causes St. Gatien has not so far this year been much riding and consequently, riding, which is the cause of the early start, was whetted at present is artificial, and he is probably at his best at the back end of his three-year-old career. Never the Devil, Fox-hill, and St. Gatien have displayed the form than they did at the Newmarket October meetings as three-year-olds, and to go further back, there is Blue Gown's second for the Cambridge with a stalling, and the victories of Julius and Feather-hall, with the various ones in the Cesarewitch and the

To trench against two-year-old racing is absurd. An owner of race horses would miss the chance of many valuable prizes if he did not run his colts when they are half through their first lustrum. The Bard, for instance, one of the smartest young ones of the year, who is in the hands of one of the astutest of modern trainers, has won fourteen races within the last five months; it will be interesting to

watch his future career, and see whether his juvenile exertions affect his training. What inducement can be offered to owners to refrain from racing their young ones off their legs? At present the inducements are all the other way. With such valuable stakes as are given now, to own a flying two-year-old is to be in possession of a fine income for the season. The colt may not stand training next year: it is better to make hay while

the sun shines, and not trouble our heads about the great three-year-old prizes; and remember after that age the owner of a good horse on the English turf has nothing substantial to run for.

Looking back at the record of past Dorbys, it will be found that the victors as a rule were never much raced during their two-year-old career. This season, for instance, Melton and Paradox stand out prominently superior to those of their year. The former ran four times as a two-year-old, commencing at

As yet in June; the latter only twice, and made his first appearance at Newmarket in October. Thormanby, it is true, ran nine times as a two-year-old, and it was perhaps the belief that all colts were Thormanbys that led to the downfall of Durdos. Legislation for two-year-old racing has been tried and found unsatisfactory. At present everything tends to foster juvenile racing, from the large sums offered by the lessees of courses for their competition to the monstrous iniquity, the Feather Plate, Cesarewitch Course, two miles and a quarter, in

which two-year-olds are allowed to take part, and which is run at Newmarket during the Houghton meeting under the direct auspices of the Jockey Club. A mile is surely the outside distance that a two-year-old should be allowed to race, the result is that we have a paucity of old horses in training, and this prize like the Goodwood Cup falls to a moderate horse such as Athorpe, who, by the way, started but thrice as a two-year-old, and then not till the middle of May.

A prominent feature of modern racing is the growing favor of what are denominated cate-

money meetings, such as Kempton, Sandown, Four Oaks, &c. They are gradually superseding the old-fashioned fixtures, and where the lessees are not keenly alive to the signs of the times, the speedy doom of many a time-honored battle field is certain. Owners prefer well-constructed courses and liberal sums of money to running for their own money over ground that involves not only risk to their horses, but in many cases results in a most unsatisfactory trial for the owners and a little more than thirty years ago there were perhaps no more popular races than the Cheltenham

Cup. In 1852 forty-three horses faced the starter, the biggest field that ever contested a race in England. The runners in those years it averaged from twenty-five to thirty, and yet it would be hard to find a worse race course. There was an enormous amount of betting over it, and yet what a lottery it all was! The horses were started in three ranks, owners drawing for choice of places, and then raced for two miles and upward round what really today dominated a circus; and when it is borne in mind that in 1852 the rider of Joe Miller the winner weighed but 115 lbs., it is not surprising that the race was called the "Punch and Judy."

pounds, the danger to both horse and jockey may be imagined. Lads of that weight could hardly be relied upon to control a hard-pulling colt in such a melee, and that serious accidents were often the outcome of the Chester Cup need occasion little surprise. Chester still lingers, it is true, under the aegis of the Duke of Westminster, but it is the spasmodic flicker of an expiring rushlight, and it requires little divination to foretell that the famous name of the Koozee will in a few years be abandoned to fraternal oblivion.

And, now, let another famous name

warning by Chester. "The Derby is run over a course both bad and dangerous. Nobody that has ever seen the horses come round Tattenham Corner, and afterward examined that turn, can fail to have been struck with its excessively hazardous character, when ridden round at racing pace. Not only is it a most awkward bend, but it is made worse by the ground sloping like a penthouse roof. From the stand side of the course to Tattenham Corner is a very deep ditch, and in a dry season nothing is more likely than that a horse should alight in, and drown in, it."

older jockeys, with memories of bad races, and their nerves not quite what they were in their youth, should fear the oft-recurring scrimmage at that point, and, even at the risk of losing ground, give the famous corner a wide berth. The shareholders of the grand stand divide a large dividend yearly, and do next to nothing for the comfort or convenience of their patrons. Racing is becoming every day more of a business than a sport, and if the executive owners of their ways owners of horses may awake to the fact that the subscription to the Derby is the last straw, there is still time to

Another thing likely to lessen the interest taken in the great Epsom race is that it is no longer possible to win such stakes as were taken out of the ring in former days. I question, now Capt. Batchelor is gone, whether there is a yearly bookmaker on the Derby left; and the tempting twenty thousand to three hundred which Stephenson, and other great secondaries of yore, were so fond of proferring are no longer available. The whole system of betting has undergone

drod change of late, and seems to be trending almost exclusively to betting at the post. One sure sign of this is the extreme sensitiveness of the market, and the backing of a horse for two or three hundred pounds will shorten his price by many points at once. Mr. Chardin in 1867 perhaps won the biggest stake ever secured over the Blue Ribbon of the turf. It was said to be well over one hundred thousand pounds, though it may be exaggerated. A considerable slice of that amount did not come out of the ring, but was the result of a bet bet with another owner.

Cub, one of the heaviest wagers ever made, stood to. What a horse, by the way, the Hermit has been to Mr. Chaplin! From that bitter day in May, when starting ragged, forlorn, and friendless, he unexpectedly won his owner the largest sum ever landed on the Downs, to last July, when his stock fetched thousands, he has proved a veritable gold mine. Twelve yearlings from Blankney were offered for sale at the market July meeting this year, and realized £1,350, for the enormous average of £1,625 apiece. Five of these were by Hermit, and contributed £164,000.

The control of three or four different stables being placed in the hands of one individual militates against the interests of the turf. I shall quote the Lincolnshire Handicap of this year as a prominent example of the mischief it does, when some three or four stables were under the control of Mr. Peck. No one can say that Mr. Peck did anything but the best for his various clients. By a series of trials, probably in some cases collateral, he ascertained which of the lot was the best, and the correctness of his judgment was not only amply vindicated in the race, but by subsequent events.

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